
An Introduction to the Study of Social Evolution. The Prehistoric Period by F. Stuart Chapin

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Source: *The Journal of Race Development*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Jul., 1914), p. 122

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29738030>

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NOTES AND REVIEWS

An Introduction to the Study of Social Evolution. The Prehistoric Period. By F. STUART CHAPIN, A.M., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Economics and Sociology, Smith College. Pp. 306. New York: The Century Company, 1913.

This book is a fairly comprehensive summary in small space of various topics of interest to the student of society. It is divided into two principal parts of which the first deals with Organic Evolution and the second with Social Evolution. Part I contains three chapters, the first two of which are strictly biological, while the third deals with The Origin and Antiquity of Man. The character of the subjects dealt with in the remainder of the book will be sufficiently indicated by the chapter titles: Association; The Influences of Physical Environment; Social Heredity; Races and Peoples; Tribal Society; and The Transition from Tribal Society to Civil Society. The book is interestingly written but considering the limited quantity of descriptive material is doubtless over-illustrated as a class guide. Its usefulness is greatly increased by references at the close of each chapter. These references, however, are merely the titles of books and therefore lack definiteness.

While a very serviceable volume for introductory study, and this is all it pretends to be, it does not itself contain more than a third of the matter which a volume as extensive in scope ought to include. It consequently gives an appearance of hastiness in construction and superficiality in treatment. It is not certain, however, that the latter fault can be entirely avoided in an introductory treatment of social evolution. Moreover as the list of chapter headings shows the book lacks continuity and coherency of treatment nor is there any place in the volume where the different factors treated are brought together into consistent relationship. Nevertheless the volume is for the present quite serviceable and raises the hope that a volume along somewhat similar lines may soon appear which will satisfy the very great need for a college textbook on this subject.

F. H. HANKINS.